

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 946

asked on Wednesday, 23 August 2023

MR L MILLAR ASKED MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND SMALL BUSINESS, MINISTER FOR TRAINING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER FOR YOUTH JUSTICE (HON D FARMER)

QUESTION:

With reference to only 250 students having completed agricultural qualifications since Queensland TAFE took over the delivery of this training in 2018—

Will the Minister advise the cause of the low number of graduates and what steps have been taken to resolve it?

ANSWER:

As stated in the response to Question on Notice 877 asked on 16 June 2023, over 250 students completed the Certificate III in Agriculture qualification through TAFE Queensland (TAFEQ) since 2018.

Since 2018, 69.8% of students who commenced this qualification at TAFEQ have completed their studies or are still in training, well above the national completion rate of 55.7%.

During the same period, more than 4,700 students have completed a range of agricultural qualifications, courses and skillsets at TAFEQ. The list of agriculture related courses and skills sets available from TAFEQ are as follows:

- Certificate II in Agriculture
- Certificate II in Animal Care
- Certificate II in Animal Studies
- Certificate II in Production Horticulture
- Certificate II in Rural Operations
- Certificate III in Agriculture
- Certificate III in Animal Care Services
- Certificate III in Animal Studies
- Certificate III in Captive Animals
- Certificate III in Companion Animal Services
- Certificate III in Production Horticulture
- Certificate III in Rural Operations
- Certificate III in Wildlife and Exhibited Animal Care
- Certificate IV in Veterinary Nursing
- Diploma of Agriculture
- Diploma of Agribusiness Management
- Chemical Application for Agriculture Skill Set
- Microchip Implantation for Dogs and Cats Skill Set
- Operate Tractors Skill Set
- Catch and Load Poultry Skill Set

Training offered by TAFEQ is guided by local needs and demand and is provided on site, online, in the workplace or on campus.

More broadly, the Queensland Government has a range of strategies and initiatives in place to support the current and future workforce for this important industry.

The *Good People. Good Jobs: Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022-2032* is a whole of Government strategy that focuses on ensuring Queensland has the right balance of skilled workers both now and into the future to support industries to grow and thrive.

The *Queensland Agriculture Industry Workforce Plan 2022-2027* (Plan), draft *Queensland Agtech Roadmap* and *Queensland Agriculture Low Emissions Roadmap 2022-2032* help inform investment priorities for emerging and future skills to support transitioning workforce demands.

Rapid innovation and change across the agribusiness value chain will require a range of new skills and capability. By 2029, more than 40% of jobs in agriculture will be transformed through the impact of technology such as automation and augmentation. Modelling also predicts that one in three new jobs created in agriculture, forestry and fishing will be technology related (*KPMG and Skills Impact, Agricultural Workforce Digital Capability Framework, 2019*).

Growing the Queensland agriculture and fisheries skills and capability will require a multi-faceted approach including attracting people with transferable skills from other sectors, building the skills of people already in agribusiness, and preparing the next generation.

The Plan was developed by the Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) in partnership with Jobs Queensland and in collaboration with the Rural Jobs and Skills Alliance (RJSA).

The findings from statewide consultation informed this industry-led, strategic five-year Plan to address current and emerging workforce issues experienced across the agriculture sector, including the forecast demand for highly skilled roles to support the changing nature of modern farming businesses.

In addition, the Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training is also providing specific funding to support future skills needs in the sector. This includes through the VET Emerging Industries (VEI) initiative, which includes a \$5 million Agribusiness Strategy, consisting of a \$2 million TAFE Agricultural Rural and Regional Strategy, a \$2 million Agriculture Skills Fund; and a \$1 million Beef Processing Skills Fund.

Through the Agribusiness Strategy and a VEI Agriculture working group, the Queensland Government in consultation with TAFEQ and industry stakeholders has developed and implemented projects that deliver new training priorities within the agriculture/agribusiness sectors.

TAFEQ has worked closely with a number of stakeholders across the state to identify skills issues, anticipated needs and priorities. The TAFE Agricultural Rural and Regional Strategy includes the development of resources, units, skillsets, microcredentials, pilot delivery and educator training across the following areas:

- Working in agriculture;
- Drones in agriculture;
- Soft skills, technical and technology in agribusiness;
- Product development – rural operations/agribusiness, horticulture, conservation and ecosystem management, nursery management; and
- Job matching and placement.

Since 2017, the Queensland Government has also allocated over \$12.55 million for state-of-the-art agricultural training facilities across Queensland to allow more specialised and industry relevant agriculture courses to be delivered to students, as follows:

- \$2.7 million - stage 1 new Rural Centre of Excellence at Toowoomba, completed in 2020 (part of Advancing Our Training Infrastructure 2017 election commitment);
- \$3.4 million - Agriculture Centre of Excellence at Bowen, completed in 2022 (part of Equipping TAFE for our Future (ETFOF) current election commitment);
- \$2 million - Aquaculture Centre of Excellence at Cannonvale, completed in 2023 (part of ETFOF current election commitment);
- \$1.1 million - stage 2 of Rural Centre of Excellence at Toowoomba, completed in 2022 (part of ETFOF current election commitment); and
- \$3.35 million - Agriculture and Horticulture Centre at Bundaberg, to be delivered in 2023-24.